

O 032126Z MAY 00
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4799
INFO NSC WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC
DIRONDCP WASHDC
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LIMA
USINT HAVANA
USCINCSO MIAMI FL//SCJ2/SCJ5/POLAD//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 003734

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/26/10

TAGS: [PINS](#) [PTER](#) [MASS](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: FARC INAUGURATES CLANDESTINE POLITICAL PARTY

REFS: A) BOGOTA 3560 B) BOGOTA 3610

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR CURTIS W. KAMMAN, REASON 1.5(B).

SUMMARY

11. (C) AMIDST GREAT FANFARE AND TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ONLOOKERS, THE FARC ANNOUNCED APRIL 29 ITS "CLANDESTINE POLITICAL PARTY," THE "BOLIVARIAN MOVEMENT." FARC CHIEF MARULANDA SAID THE CLANDESTINE CHARACTER OF THE PARTY WAS INTENDED TO PROTECT ITS MEMBERS FROM A SYSTEMATIC MURDER CAMPAIGN SUCH AS THAT WHICH BEFELL THE U.P. IN THE 1980'S. ALL WHO SHARE THE FARC'S THINKING, WHETHER OR NOT THEY APPROVE OF ITS ARMED STRUGGLE, ARE WELCOME TO JOIN, SAID PARTY DIRECTOR AND FARC SECRETARIAT MEMBER ALFONSO CANO. THE PARTY'S PLATFORM IS RURAL POPULIST/COMMUNIST. THE INAUGURATION OF THE PARTY MAY BE INTENDED TO GATHER POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE UNPOPULAR GUERRILLA MOVEMENT; COULD BE PART OF AN EFFORT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE FARC CONTROL OF AREAS UNDER ITS INFLUENCE; OR MAY BE A DIVERSION TO UNDERMINE SUPPORT FOR THE MILITARY COMPONENT OF PLAN COLOMBIA. AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME CANO INAUGURATED THE PARTY, FARC MILITARY COMMANDER BRICENO REPORTEDLY ORDERED HIS TROOPS TO STEP UP WAR ACTIONS. END SUMMARY.

MARULANDA ANNOUNCES COMMUNIST, CLANDESTINE PARTY

12. (U) ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE FARC TRUCKED IN TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE FROM AROUND PUTUMAYO, CAQUETA, AND HUILA DEPARTMENTS TO WITNESS THE APRIL 29 INAUGURATION OF ITS POLITICAL PARTY, THE BOLIVARIAN MOVEMENT ("MOVIMIENTO BOLIVARIANO"), AT SAN VICENTE DEL CAGUAN, IN ITS DESPEJE (DEMILITARIZED ZONE). A PARADE OF FARC COMBATANTS, THE LAUNCHING OF 50,000 BALLOONS, A BARBECUE OF 400 HEAD OF CATTLE, AND A "VALLENATO" MUSIC CONCERT ROUNDED OUT THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES. BEFORE AN ENTHUSIASTIC, ASSAULT RIFLE-TOTING CROWD OF THOUSANDS, FARC LEADER MANUEL MARULANDA ("TIROFIJO") ANNOUNCED THAT THE PARTY WOULD, FOR THE TIME BEING, REMAIN CLANDESTINE. SPEAKING BEFORE A LARGE, PUBLIC CROWD, MARULANDA SAID THE ANONYMITY OF THE MOVEMENT'S MEMBERS WAS NECESSARY TO AVOID THE FATE OF THE "UNION PATRIOTICA." (NOTE: 2,000 - 3,000 MEMBERS OF THE PATRIOTIC UNION, A LEGAL, LEFTIST POLITICAL PARTY PRINCIPALLY CONSTITUTED BY THE FARC AND THE COLOMBIAN COMMUNIST PARTY, WERE MURDERED IN THE MID- AND LATE-1980'S. AS A SURVIVAL TACTIC, THE UP FORMALLY SEVERED ITS LINKS TO THE FARC IN THE LATE 1980'S. MUCH DEBILITATED, IT STILL EXISTS TODAY. END NOTE.)

CANO PRESENTS PARTY PLATFORM

13. (C) MARULANDA INTRODUCED FARC SECRETARIAT MEMBER

ALFONSO CANO AS THE PARTY'S DIRECTOR. (NOTE: CANO IS THE FARC'S PREMIER POLITICO, AND RECENTLY HAS HAD LITTLE INVOLVEMENT IN EITHER THE PEACE PROCESS OR THE FARC'S MILITARY OFFENSIVES. HE WAS THE FARC'S CHIEF NEGOTIATOR FOR THE UNSUCCESSFUL PEACE TALKS WITH THE GAVIRIA GOVERNMENT, 1990-1993. END NOTE.) CANO SAID THE PARTY ASPIRED TO NATIONAL POLITICAL POWER, AND THAT SOME OF ITS MEMBERS WOULD COMPETE CLANDESTINELY IN THE OCTOBER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. THE PARTY WOULD PROVIDE "AN ALTERNATIVE TO COLOMBIA'S CORRUPT, TRADITIONAL POLITICAL ELITES, AND WOULD BE OPEN TO ALL PERSONS WHO IDENTIFY WITH THE FARC'S THINKING, IF NOT WITH ITS ARMED STRUGGLE . . . AND WHO ARE NOT ENEMIES OF THE STATE (I.E., PARAMILITARIES, CORRUPT POLITICIANS)."

14. (U) CANO OUTLINED A RURAL POPULIST/COMMUNIST PLATFORM, WHICH FOCUSED ON EXTENDING BASIC SERVICES TO RURAL AREAS. HE PROPOSED STRONG STATE INTERVENTION IN THE ECONOMY, AGRARIAN REFORM, AND AN AUTARKIC ECONOMY WHICH WOULD REMAIN CLOSED TO "THE EMPIRE" (I.E., THE UNITED STATES). CANO CALLED FOR SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND TREATMENT OF BLACK AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES. HE CHARACTERIZED THE PARTY AS THE MANIFESTATION OF THE FARC'S PREFERENCE FOR POLITICAL, RATHER THAN ARMED, STRUGGLE. HOWEVER, SHOULD THE USG AND THE GOC CONTINUE CURRENT POLICIES, CANO SAID THE FARC WOULD BE LEFT NO CHOICE BUT TO GIVE PRIORITY TO ARMED STRUGGLE.

NOT A NEW INITIATIVE

15. (U) CANO SAID THE FARC FOUNDED THE BOLIVARIAN MOVEMENT IN 1996, WHEN IT BEGAN FORMING CELLS IN HIGH SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES, FACTORIES AND ELSEWHERE. THE ELECTION OF THE PARTY'S GOVERNING BOARD, THE "BOLIVARIAN PATRIOTIC COUNCIL, COMPOSED OF 100 WELL-KNOWN COLOMBIANS," WOULD SOON FOLLOW. (NOTE: THE FARC HAS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THE EXISTENCE OF THE BOLIVARIAN MOVEMENT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, BUT NEVER WITH SO MUCH FANFARE. THE MOVEMENT HAS ALTERNATIVELY BEEN DESCRIBED AS AN "INTELLECTUAL CADRE" FOR THE FARC. ITS FORMATION WAS FIRST CALLED FOR AT THE FARC'S EIGHTH PLENARY CONGRESS IN 1993. COLOMBIAN LAW PROSCRIBES MEMBERSHIP IN THE FARC AND SEVERAL OTHER ORGANIZATIONS; THE LEGALITY OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE BOLIVARIAN MOVEMENT IS SO FAR UNCLEAR. END NOTE.)

(C) DID THE NINTH PLENARY OCCUR?

16. (C) THE LAUNCHING OF THE BOLIVARIAN MOVEMENT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THE ONLY BIG FARC GATHERING IN THE DESPEJE IN RECENT WEEKS: THE FARC'S NINTH PLENARY MEETING WAS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH OR APRIL 2000. AT THESE RARE, MAJOR GATHERINGS OF FARC FRONT COMMANDERS, PLANS AND POLICIES FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS ARE SET. HOWEVER, EMBASSY HAS BEEN UNABLE TO CONFIRM WHETHER THE NINTH PLENARY MEETING IN FACT OCCURRED.

WHILE CANO TALKS POLITICS, JOJOY TALKS WAR

17. (U) BOGOTA PRESS PUBLISHED APRIL 29 A RADIO ADDRESS BY FARC MILITARY LEADER JORGE BRICENO (AKA, "MONO JOJOY") TO HIS TROOPS. THE ADDRESS WAS REPORTEDLY INTERCEPTED BY ARMY INTELLIGENCE. BRICENO SAID, "THIS IS OUR BASIC TENET: WE MUST ATTACK, KIDNAP, FLAY; THAT IS, STRIP THE ENEMIES OF THE REVOLUTION OF THEIR MONEY." HE CALLED FOR USING THE RESPITE PROVIDED BY THE PEACE TALKS TO DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF FARC COMBATANTS, "FROM 16,000 TO 32,000." HE CALLED ON FARC MEMBERS TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT: "SOME OF OUR PEOPLE WILL DO SO IN KEEPING WITH THE CONSTITUTION BY ACTING IN AN OPEN FASHION AND OTHERS WILL WORK ON THE FRINGES OF THE LAW BY USING WEAPONS." REGARDING THE BOLIVARIAN MOVEMENT, BRICENO REPORTEDLY SAID IT WOULD BE WELCOMED "SO LONG AS THEY CONSTRUCT A PARTY FOR WAR." REGARDING THE OCTOBER ELECTIONS, BRICENO SAID, "BALLOT BOXES MUST BE BURNED AND EVERYTHING DESTROYED . . . AND

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT POLITICIANS COME, WHETHER LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE, WE WILL TAKE THEM PRISONER." WHEN CONFRONTED BY A JOURNALIST WITH BRICENO'S UNTIMELY REMARKS, CANO SAID HE WAS UNFAMILIAR WITH THEM, AND ATTRIBUTED THEM TO ARMY DISINFORMATION.

COMMENT

18. (C) BY FORMALLY LAUNCHING THE BOLIVARIAN MOVEMENT, THE FARC IS MAKING ITS FIRST FORAY INTO PARTY POLITICS IN 15 YEARS. THE CLANDESTINE CHARACTER OF THE PARTY IS, AS MARULANDA SAID, A REACTION TO THE 1980'S MURDERS OF UP MEMBERS. SO WHY THIS, AND WHY NOW? DOUBTLESS, THE FARC IS TRYING TO STEAL BACK THE SPOTLIGHT FROM THE ELN, WHICH HAS BEEN THE FOCUS OF MUCH ATTENTION LATELY (REF A). GIVEN THE CONGRESSIONAL CRISIS AND WIDESPREAD DISENCHANTMENT WITH TRADITIONAL PARTIES, THE TIME SEEMS RIPE TO LAUNCH (OR RE-LAUNCH) A POLITICAL PARTY -- FORMER BOGOTA MAYOR ANTANAS MOCKUS JUST DID IT, AND SO DID THE LABOR UNIONS. THE FARC KNOWS LACK OF REAL POLITICAL SUPPORT IS ITS ACHILLES' HEEL, AND IS TRYING TO RECRUIT SOME. ALSO, SEVERAL DEVELOPMENTS -- THE FARC'S RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW "TAXES" NATIONWIDE AND A SEPARATE, REVOLUTIONARY JUSTICE SYSTEM FOR THE DESPEJE, AS WELL AS THE INAUGURATION OF THE BOLIVARIAN MOVEMENT -- LEAD US TO BELIEVE THE FARC IS TRYING TO INSTITUTIONALIZE CONTROL OVER THE MUNICIPALITIES UNDER ITS SWAY. FINALLY, THE FARC FEARS USG MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE GOC. BY ENGAGING IN CEASE-FIRE TALKS (BEGUN APRIL 27, REF B) AND SUPPOSEDLY PURSUING POWER VIA ITS NEW POLITICAL PARTY, THE FARC MAY BE TRYING TO UNDERMINE POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE MILITARY COMPONENT OF PLAN COLOMBIA.

KAMMAN

>